

**GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD – RI
STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS TASK TEAM MEETING
JANUARY 24, 2006**

MINUTES

Members Present: Joe MarcAurele, William McGowan, Brandon Melton, Martin Trueb

Members Absent: Armeather Gibbs, Deborah Wilson, Lorna Ricci

Staff Present: M. Koback, M. McGetrick, L. DelRossi, M. McDowell, N. Olson, G. Guardino, G. Theriault, Esq., P. Harden from EDC

With a quorum present, Chair MarcAurele called the meeting to order at 3:12 PM. He directed the committee's attention to the proposed funding opportunities which were voted on and approved at the full Board meeting on January 19th. He explained that the funding opportunities did not deviate tremendously from what has been done in the past. M. Koback was asked to explain the process for soliciting and awarding grants under the four models. It was also noted that all awards must meet State of Rhode Island purchasing regulations.

Under the Structured RFP category, the process would include a dedicated application format; public notices and advertisements; pre-proposer conferences; detailed timelines, establishment of review and rating procedures. An example would be the Workforce Improvement Program.

A Targeted RFP would be for specific organizations being invited to apply. The process might include a specific application format; detailed timelines; a review and rating process; specific program limitations. An example would be the Industry Partnership RFP.

Solicited (sole source – used in very rare cases) when the proposer is the only qualified organization available to assist the Board in fulfilling its mission and goals in a specific program area. An example would be Rhode Island College and the Teacher Training Institute.

The fourth category would be the Non-Competitive Matching Basis for workforce expansion only. Applications would be solicited from employers who plan to expand their existing workforce or from those planning to relocate to the state. This process will operate the same as the former Job Creation Grants Program with the Economic Development Corporation (EDC). The Board will make funds available to EDC, which in turn will solicit proposals from the companies. Funding of proposals is to be approved by the committee with a report out to the full Board per the Board's resolution on January 19.

M. McGetrick announced the release of the Workforce Improvement Program RFP. A Pre-Proposal Conference will be held on February 1, 2006 at the Crown Plaza Hotel. Responses will be due March 10th. Individuals such as those from previously funded companies and other partner organizations will be recruited to review and rate the proposals, with recommendations for funding being given to the full Board. This would occur sometime in April so that training could begin on May 1, 2006. Copies of the RFP were distributed to members who might have missed seeing it. Mavis informed members that the application itself had been simplified to less

than 10 pages; and there is no limitation on the types of training a company can provide as long as it meets the guidelines.

M. McGetrick stated that one of the goals is to attract new companies which haven't applied in four or five years by adding bonus points and also targeting the high wage industries in the state identified by the Labor Market Information data. To ensure that the employer is contributing to the Job Development Fund and payments are up to date, their state identification number is requested on the application and a list of all companies with their ID numbers is sent to the State Division of Taxation for review. This would also include non-profit, trade and labor organizations that apply and pay into the fund.

M. McGetrick proceeded to explain the Workforce Expansion category that works on the same premise as the former Job Creation Grant Program model. Applications are solicited from employers who plan to relocate to Rhode Island or a Rhode Island company that is expanding their workforce. P. Harden from the Economic Development Corporation would then work with the company to develop the application. Some referrals might also be channeled to him through the Governor's Workforce Board or the Local Workforce Investment Boards. There is no limit of funds awarded under this category. The grant award would depend on the number of employees to be trained and the level of skills needed. In the past, companies were required to present their proposals in person, but this proved time consuming as a rule. However, the committee will reserve the right to request a presentation if needed.

Something new is proposed to be added to this category. The federal Workforce Investment Act legislation (WIA) allows an activity called On-the-Job Training, where a company would hire one or two people to be trained. 50% of the employee's salary could be reimbursed for five or six months depending on the skills or the specific job the employee is being trained for. Staff would work with the local WIBs. M. Koback informed the committee that the OJT return on investment has been very good. Staff is requesting authority from the committee to award individual training grants up to \$10,000 with a cap for this activity of \$100,000, to be revisited again in six months. These funds would not be from the allocated Workforce Expansion category budget. Instead, it is proposed to use de-obligated funds to support this activity, only after the WIA funds have been exhausted.

Regarding the Youth Strategies category, the Youth Strategies Team has already developed some good ideas. The task team may need to put a package together to be presented to this committee for approval and awards, and the committee would have to follow all the state purchasing regulations. If it is an activity that will require an RFP, then staff will issue an RFP.

Pertaining to Partnership Building and Strategic Initiatives, staff believes that work will probably result from some of the other committees. For instance, the Governance Committee has been discussing the need for a board retreat/strategic planning session. This would require hiring a facilitator for this event, so an RFP will have to be issued.

M. McGetrick stated that all awards made through an RFP would first come before the Strategic Investment Committee, then through the State Purchasing system and if needed, before the full Board for approval.

Proposal Review Guidelines were discussed briefly. All proposals submitted would be reviewed by the GWB-RI staff to determine if it falls within the scope and purpose of the GWB's intent. The complete proposal or a synopsis would then be forwarded to the Strategic Investment Committee for review. The proposal could, in some instances, be sent to another committee for review and comment. The Strategic Investment Committee after its review can: approve funding as requested; approve funding with modifications or conditions; reject the request; table the request; or return the request to the proposer for further clarifications, or modifications.

In the event that an application is rejected, the proposer may request a meeting with staff or appeal in writing directly to the GWB-RI Executive Director.

It was the consensus of the committee to have all the funds obligated by July 1, 2006.

A motion was entered to approve the process for the granting of funds under each of the funding categories.

VOTE: W. McGowan moved to approve, seconded by M. Trueb. B. Melton and J. MarcAurele approved.

A motion was entered to approve the Strategic Investment Committee minutes for November 17, 2006 with a change in the wording.

VOTE: W. McGowan moved to approve, seconded by B. Melton. M. Trued and J. MarcAurele approved.

G. Guardino provided some background on the Job Training Tax Credit Program historically administered by the Human Resource Investment Council. In view of the new statute, the legislation would have to change, so that the regulations could be tightened up along with a new tax credit application.

A motion was entered to approve the draft legislation for the RI Jobs Training Tax Credit Program.

VOTE: B. Melton moved to approve, seconded by M. Trueb.
W. McGowan and J. MarcAurele approved.

The meeting adjourned at 4:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marsha McDowell